

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and associated apparatus for providing access to the Internet or other network is described, where clients may connect their own computers to a LAN supplied by the access provider, who may charge for such access and may use security protocols for denying access to unauthorized or nonpaying users, and where the contract between client and access provider may be established at the point of access, independently of a previous relationship between both parties, and may have term as short as the client desires. In one aspect, the access provider may use the access services of another access provider and may use Network Address Translation (NAT) to reduce access costs. The client may select the desired level of security, usage metrics, usage limits, and payment options, and may monitor and control his or her usage. In one aspect, the client does not need to reveal his or her identity to the access provider. In one aspect, the access provider may present to the client a certificate signed by a Certification Authority that ensures that the access provider is bona fide and secure. In one aspect, the access provider gives the client a receipt that the client may use to recover from client or access provider failures.

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